



Ignatian Spirituality Centre

Glasgow

lentretreat.uk

Meeting Six: Fifth Week of Lent

Welcome: We suggest beginning with tea/coffee and biscuits while people gather and are welcomed.

Opening Prayer – Take a couple of minutes of quiet prayer to ask God to be with you during the meeting. Pray that God might speak to the heart of each person in the group.

Sharing - Ask each individual to go over their prayer times this week; give them a moment to consult their journal.

You might ask them:

- How did you find praying the daily Scripture or other meditations?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Did any of the Scripture passages or other meditations have any special meaning for you?
- How did you feel over the week?
- What is God saying to you? Is God asking anything of you?

Teaching: Making Good Decisions – a Meditation

Stilling

Begin with one of the stilling exercises.

God's Presence

Be aware you are in the presence of God who loves you and wants the best for you.

Ask God for what you desire, here it could be: Always to do what God wants me to do.

(You may want the group to make a list in their notebooks for the next section.)

My Weaknesses: Let us consider our weaknesses. What are you not very good at?

If the Tempter wants to lead you away from good, lead you away from God, what is the easiest way to do it?

What brings you down; makes you feel helpless, useless?

My Talents: Let us consider now our own talents.

What abilities has God given you?

What do other people say you are good at?

What makes you feel good about yourself?

How long a list can you make? Hopefully it will be longer than your weaknesses!

A good Decision: Consider one decision in your life that you made and have not regretted. (Don't get side-tracked on considering those you have regretted!)

Think for a moment on how this decision has benefited you.

How it has benefited others.

Has this decision allowed you to use your talents?

How do you feel now about this choice that you have made?

Talk to God: Talk to God, (Jesus, Father) about this decision. What does God feel about it?

Imagine God replying to you.

Final Prayer: End the prayer period with a formal prayer such as the Lord's Prayer/Our Father.

Review: After the prayer you may wish that the group share elements of the prayer above with each other, either their nearest neighbour or with the group. N.B. People might find both their weaknesses and perhaps even more their talents embarrassing to discuss with others. This will depend upon the level of trust the group members have with each other.

If people found this meditation helpful, they may want to take to prayer and to God a decision they made that they have regretted. This would only be good if they already have a positive view of God who wants the best for them.

If they imagine God as one who is constantly judging them, trying to catch them out, then this would best be avoided.

4. Looking Forward – Make sure the time and venue etc. of the next meeting is clear.

5. Thank everyone for coming.

Leader's Notes: Discernment

When we are looking at major changes in our lives; whether to get married, change our job, move house etc. we need to bring head and heart together.

Sort the Facts: We need to make sure our feet are on the ground; that the options we are considering are really open to us. If my beloved and I haven't discussed getting married, then my decision isn't whether to get married, but whether to ask my beloved to marry me or not. For most major decisions in life there is another party who has as much or even more say than we do.

Be Aware of the Feelings: We need to be aware of how different options open to us make us feel. Does one option bring a sense of peace, a sense of excitement, the promise of life, a sense that this is right for me and others who are involved?

We all have Decisions to Make: If you have a group with a number of younger adults, then there may be many major decisions still ahead. But even older people in a group may be having to make a major decision such as whether to give up their home of many years and go into sheltered accommodation.

Trust God: God is unlikely to whisper in your ear or send you a dream, but God does work through our own minds and hearts. How can we most be ourselves and use our God-given talents for the good? God speaks through our deepest desires.

Using my Talents: A question to consider is: "How can I best use my talents, my gifts, my possessions, for the benefit of others? What fulfills me and helps others?" To answer these questions we need to be able, in all humility, to be honest about our talents and abilities.

Options: Sometimes people are living in desolation and think they don't have any options. Often this is because they haven't looked at the more radical solutions. There are almost always alternatives for us. If we are living an unhappy life, the chances are others are unhappy too. Think big!

You can Change If it turns out we made the wrong decision, the wise move is to admit this honestly, and look to see what is the right thing to do now. It is not clever or noble to spend a lifetime in desolation because we chose wrongly.

Share your Concerns: Talking to a wise and trusted person who doesn't have a stake in your decisions can often be a great help for you to sort things out.

P.S. If people are finding the retreat helpful you might like to make a wee collection next week for the ISC. Though the book is free, it takes time and effort to produce all the different retreat materials.

Ideally collect the money then pay it in through the 'donate' button on www.lentretreat.uk at the bottom of the page.